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SOME THOUGHTS ON THE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE JAPANESE PEOPLE

PART II

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Let it be kept in mind that we have already, in Article I, surveyed the growth of the Japanese nation up to the Meiji era, and that the study before us is not the history of this era as a whole, but only certain phases of that history. It is our effort to make clear why Japanese citizens often make, in regard to political matters, a decision—why political affairs take a turn—which seems bewildering to the American or European onlooker. In other words, we are tracing the influence upon the political life of Japan of four elements, namely: Race origin, geographic and climatic environment, feudal institutions, and the family institution, as stated in the first article of this series.⁸

THE EMPEROR

Right at the beginning of our inquiry into Meiji era politics stands the emperor. The emperor was always important in the national life, but especially so since 1868, because he was then restored to power through the operation of forces calculated to vindicate anew his rights, to lift him into lime-light display, and to make him truly the center and source of national life. To understand more clearly the subject before us, we must not only seek to understand the Imperial House, but we must do this from the Japanese standpoint. Never mind what we think of the presidency in American life, or the Britisher of kingship in English life. The question is, what is the place and power of "mikadoism," to borrow a comprehensive term, in Japanese law, religion, custom, and life?

⁸ Spencer, *Journal of Race Development*, vii, pp. 291-302.

In the preamble to the constitution, promulgated February 11, 1889, the emperor says:

Having, by virtue of our ancestors, ascended the throne of a lineal succession unbroken for ages eternal; desiring to promote the welfare of, and to give development to the moral and intellectual faculties of our beloved subjects, the very same that have been favored with the benevolent care and affectionate vigilance of our ancestors, and hoping to maintain the prosperity of the state, in concern with our people and with their support, we promulgate a fundamental law of state, to exhibit the principles, by which we are to be guided in our conduct, and to point to what our descendants and our subjects and their descendants are forever to conform.

Here divine right to rule is clearly claimed. In the introduction to Chapter I of the same constitution dealing with the powers of the emperor, the following declaration is made:

The sacred throne of Japan is inherited from imperial ancestors, and is to be bequeathed to posterity; in it resides the power to reign over and govern the state. That express provisions concerning the sovereign power are specially mentioned in the articles of the constitution, in no wise implies that any newly settled opinion thereon is set forth by the constitution, on the contrary the original national polity is by no means changed by it, but is more strongly confirmed than ever.

Then through a chapter of seventeen articles on the emperor, accompanied by Prince Ito's comments thereon, are clearly set forth the following among other facts, stated here with intentional brevity:

The emperor is the only possible ruler, both for all the past and for all the future, and only male imperial descendants may occupy the throne; the emperor is inviolable, Heaven-descended, divine and sacred; cannot be made accountable to law, and must not be made the subject of discussion; with the assistance of the imperial diet, he makes the laws, and promulgates them; the emperor convokes the imperial diet, opens, closes, and prorogues it, and dissolves the House of Representatives; in the interim of sessions of the diet, he issues imperial ordinances which have all the force of law; the emperor determines all branches of the administration, appoints all civil and military officers, fixes their salaries, and dismisses them; the emperor commands both army and navy, declares war, makes peace, and concludes treaties;

all titles of nobility, and all orders for amnesty or pardon are issued by him personally.⁹

From the above and from further study of this instrument, it will appear that the constitution is built around the emperor as a center; that the emperor is the state; and that it was the purpose of the builders of the constitution to buttress and perpetuate mikadoism for all time.

Turning now to conservative Japanese opinion, we get the views of Japanese political students hereon: Mr. Uyahara, all-in-all the best Japanese writer thus far on the political development of this people, says:

The divine right of the emperor is the fundamental principle on which the Japanese polity was first established and on which it still rests. . . . Nobody can directly thwart the emperor's will or claim, be it wise or unwise. He is the supreme lord and absolute master of the empire." . . . The emperor of Japan can say without hesitation, "I am the State," more effectively than Louis XIV, not because he can subject the people to his will, but because he is morally so recognized. Theoretically he is the center of the state as well as the state itself. He is to the Japanese mind the supreme being in the Cosmos of Japan, as God is in the universe to the pantheistic philosopher. From him everything emanates; in him everything subsists; there is nothing on the soil of Japan existent independent of him. He is the sole owner of the empire, the author of law, justice, privilege, and honor, and the symbol of the unity of the Japanese nation. He has no pope or archbishop to crown him at his accession. He is supreme in all temporal affairs of the state, as well as in all spiritual matters; and he is the foundation of Japanese social and civic morality.¹⁰

Dr. N. Hōzumi is an eminent Japanese lawyer, a barrister-at-law of the Middle Temple, England, and a prominent author. This author affirms:

"The foregoing statements lead us to a very peculiar conclusion as to the nature of the government, which may at first sight seem paradoxical, and yet is true. The emperor holds the sovereign power not as his own inherent right, but as an inheritance from his divine ancestors. The government is, therefore, *theocratical*. The emperor rules over the country as the supreme

⁹ Ito, *Commentaries on the Constitution of the Empire of Japan*, revised edition, Tokyo, 1916, pp. 1-37.

¹⁰ Uyahara Etsujiro, *The Political Development of Japan, 1867-1909*, pp. 19, 23.

head of the vast family of the Japanese nation. The government, is therefore, *patriarchal*. The emperor exercises the sovereign power according to the constitution, which is based on the most advanced principles of modern constitutionalism. The government is, therefore, *constitutional*. In other words, the fundamental principle of the Japanese government is *theocratico-patriarchal-constitutionalism*. This tripartite character of the government presents the curious meeting of the past, and present, to which I referred at the outset of this work.¹¹

Mr. Miywkawa cites the constitution to show that the emperor is owner of the realm.¹²

With these highest Japanese authorities agree all the best foreign authorities as to the imperial prerogative.¹³ The emperor is the center and source of all political life, and the people are his children. They are not merely members of a political community of which the emperor is the acknowledged ruler; they are members of a family of which he is the father. And here, too, the idea of "father" is the Japanese idea of that person. The emperor has no family name, as do other families, for he is descended from the gods, is divine, and the Japanese race belong to him through this divine right.¹⁴

Indeed his name should not be mentioned by men.¹⁵

So sacred does the conservative Japanese consider the name of his sovereign to be that in a residence of over thirty years in the country I cannot recall a single instance in which a Japanese has, in conversation, *voluntarily* mentioned to me the name of his emperor, or has himself brought up the subject of the ruler as a matter admissible of discussion. We speak of our president with remarkable freedom; an Englishman may even criticise the doings of his king; but a Japanese who would use the name of his emperor in a similarly trifling manner would not be tolerated. Because

¹¹ Hozumi Nobushige, *Ancestor Worship and Japanese Law*, pp. 87, 88.

¹² Miyakawa Matsuji, *Life in Japan*.

¹³ Brinkley, Capt. F., *A History of the Japanese People*, pp. 162, 164, 182, 403, 647. Morris, J., *Makers of Japan*, pp. 2, 44. Griffis, Wm. E., *The Mikado—Institution and Person*, p. 218. Dyer, Henry, *Dai Nippon*, p. 16.

¹⁴ Morris, J., *Makers of Japan*, p. 5, Hozumi, N., *Ancestor Worship*, p. 103.

¹⁵ Kikuchi, Baron Dairoku, *Japanese Education*, p. 7.

Mr. Yukio Ozaki, M.P., has of late uttered some sentiments publicly which might be interpreted as slightly democratic in tone, Mr. Kumazo Kamisa, of Ise, recently residing in Tokyo, committed suicide early in the summer of 1917. He left a letter, as is customary with suicides in Japan, and in this case wrote to show that he did the deed in the hope of restoring in Mr. Ozaki due reverence for the emperor.¹⁶

When sometime since the emperor was on a journey to the South, an accident occurred to another train in advance, near one of the railway stations, causing a delay to the movements of the imperial train. To atone for this slight to the emperor, the only course which the station master of the locality saw open to him was to commit suicide, and he promptly did so. The suicide of Nogi and wife, so incomprehensible to us Americans, is in Japan deemed appropriate, and a noble consecration to the imperial person. Reverence for the emperor in Japan is a sentiment which we liberty-loving and irreverent Americans are slow to comprehend.¹⁷

Last December 11, I had an interview with a prominent, widely-traveled, and well-informed Japanese gentleman, and the conversation turned upon religion in general, and the future of Christianity in Japan. This man is a very active Christian, a strong defender of the essentials of our faith, and widely known as a leader. In speaking of the objections to Christianity which he meets among his people, he declared in substance as follows:

When a man says to me in opposition to Christian teaching, What about *kokutai* (national honor, spirit, life) and Christianity? I say, I don't want you to mention *kokutai* to me. That is a very different thing from religion. Christianity interferes in no way with a man's loyalty to the state. When I speak on that subject, I speak as a statesman. That is a very dangerous point. And we must be very careful what we say. A collision must come, but we must postpone it as long as we can. You call all men sinners, one says. Is the emperor a sinner? I'll not answer you, I reply. What right have you to ask me such a question?

¹⁶ *Herald of Asia*, August 18, 1917, p. 643.

¹⁷ Kikuchi, *Japanese Education*, as above, p. 32.

That is *gebahyo* (meaning low-down gossip about superiors), and you and I have no right to be talking *gebahyo* about our sovereign. To do so is forbidden by the constitution. (The reference is to Prince Ito.)¹⁸ If I think the emperor is a sinner, I'll talk with the emperor about it, and not to other men.

Is not the government, I asked, trying to strengthen and bolster up Shintō, and so strengthen the imperial house? No, said he, not Shintō, but ancestor worship. The government wishes to fortify the imperial house against the rising tide of civilization, and so they say, it is not religion that they are encouraging, but the national spirit, so they can do this without violating the constitution; but it is a religion to the masses of the people, and we Christians have to be very careful how we oppose it, or we shall be misunderstood.¹⁹

The thoughtful reader can readily discern in the above incident the influence of the family cult upon intelligent people in this land. There is also suggested the nature of the struggle which Christianity has to meet in establishing itself, as it ultimately will do, in the social and national life of Japan.

The face of the emperor is in Japan all too sacred to be allowed to appear on the country's coins or stamps,²⁰ and for any newspaper in the land to present the ruler in such hideous caricature as is sometimes given to our president by American newspapers might cost the editor his life; it most likely would kill his paper. And is this nation-wide respect for their ruler in Japan to be condemned?

The emperor of Japan is wholly above politics. He never is known to express an opinion on political matters, and for a politician even a prime minister, to bring him into politics meets with instant protest.²¹

A self-asserting and meddling sovereign of the type of the Kaiser, is altogether foreign to our historical notion of leadership. Profound and real as is our reverence for the imperial house, our hearts revolt from the possibility of an emperor who will go about making speeches and who will continually thrust his ministers into awkward holes by issuing ill-advised statements for publication. The office of supreme ruler is so highly idealized in this country and the imperial house is so deeply merged in the

¹⁸ Ito, *Commentaries*, as above, Article iii.

¹⁹ Spencer, *Private Journal*, December, 1917.

²⁰ Griffis, W. E., *The Mikado*, etc., p. 186.

²¹ Uyehara, as above, p. 201.

life of the nation, that it is difficult for us even to conceive the possibility of ever being under a sovereign of that kind.²²

The emperor reigns, but does not rule.²³

The only method constitutionally provided for amending the constitution is for the emperor to submit a project of amendment to the imperial diet, and even then the proposed change cannot be debated by either house unless two-thirds of the members are present, and no change can be effected without at least a two-thirds majority vote of each house.²⁴ The reason why the diet cannot initiate an amendment to the constitution, Ito says, is that "the right of making amendments to the constitution must belong to the emperor himself, as he is the sole author of it."²⁵ Thus, I repeat, did the framers of the constitution seek to guard the imperial prerogative at every point. Why such stress has been laid upon this feature of the political life of the people may possibly find answer in the fact that usurpation of the throne has more than once been attempted, as history plainly shows, though Japanese writers, it must be noted, seem to take particular pains to avoid this subject.²⁶ Nevertheless, an imperial rescript, a word from the emperor, still has immense influence over *all* the people. When in 1893 a deadlock occurred in the diet over the Naval Expansion Bill, the emperor solved the question by sending to the members a message saying that he would contribute 1,800,000 *yen* from the imperial purse, and commanding that both civil and military officials should contribute 10 per cent of their salaries for a period of six years so as to complete the building of the warships. Without a further word of debate, every one complied at once, and the government was able to continue.

We have seen the same thing happen repeatedly. The government reaches an impasse in some particular, and the ship of state appears destined to go upon the rocks; when a

²² *Herald of Asia*, November 4, 1916, p. 165.

²³ Uyehara, as above, pp. 98, 124. Griffis, as above, p. 55.

²⁴ Ito, *Constitution*, as above, Article lxxii.

²⁵ Ito, *Commentaries*, as above, p. 154.

²⁶ Griffis, as above, pp. 41, 53, 113, 142, 182.

word falls from the imperial lips, and all is smooth sailing. It was thus that the Article XXVII guaranteeing religious liberty came into the constitution. For some days the debate upon the subject before the emperor had proceeded with great heat, the emperor listening; but the liberals and conservatives could not reach an agreement, so appealed to the emperor to decide it. His majesty at once replied, that religious liberty must be assured, and this settled the case. There is probably no other nation today whose people are more meekly obedient to law than are these interesting people, *providing it be clearly the law of the empire*, which means the imperial will. Respect for officers of the law on the part of the people often seems excessive, and to have no due regard for either the personal character of the individual officer or the rights of the citizen. It is the imperial influence that does it. All the victories of Japan's two great foreign wars, with China and with Russia, were attributed by her distinguished commanders directly and positively to the virtue of the emperor. Let the reader recall the visit of Admiral Togo to the imperial shrines at Ise, on his way to Tokyo to be received by the emperor after the victory of the Japan Sea.

All the mayors of cities, governors of provinces, officers of army and navy, judges of courts, heads of great schools and of departments of government, as well as members of the cabinet and of the privy council are directly appointed by the emperor; and, theoretically at least, so is every subordinate officer down to the last policeman. As to the cabinet ministers and their responsibility, Article LV of the constitution declares: "The respective ministers of state shall give their advice to the emperor and be responsible for it."

Around this article has hung the recent exciting debates concerning a responsible cabinet, the Liberals holding that the constitution permits the interpretation that the cabinet ministers shall be responsible to the diet and to party government; the Conservatives, including the *Genrō* and the house of peers, holding that the ministers are responsible to the emperor and to no other authority; that when the

emperor rejected the advice of the retiring Premier Okuma, and called Terauchi and not Kato to form a new ministry, he was acting strictly according to the constitution. As well try to understand the American Civil War or our own race riots while ignoring the color line as to think it possible to understand Japanese political, social, educational or religious life and leave out or disregard "mikadoism." Loyalty to the emperor is taught to every child from its earliest consciousness, all through the schools, in business, social and religious life; one might almost say that every Japanese dies for his emperor. And the determination of Japanese officialdom to bolster up and strengthen mikadoism seems increasingly manifest. Every influence of discarded feudalism, of the family institution and of Shintōism under its new interpretation that can contribute to strengthen reverence for a person, and that person the emperor, is being gathered up and molded into mikadoism. And this is one of the reasons for the occurrence in Japanese political life of some turns which seem to defy explanation. Closer study of the relation existing between the imperial house and the people will help to a clearer understanding. Baron Kikuchi considers this the most important factor in the national life.²⁷ Not the individual ruler but the *house* is the leading thought.²⁸

Of course individual rulers have, because possessing rare personality, often endeared themselves to the people beyond that which is most common with their rulers. This is the case with the lamented Meiji Tennō, for whom a great shrine is now being erected in Tokyo. The committee-in-charge of the building of this shrine, headed by Prince Iyesato Tokugawa, asked the people to give *yen* 4,500,000 for the purpose. Already this sum has been largely over-subscribed, *yen* 6,700,000 having been received, and it is an interesting fact that of this contribution over *yen* 700,000 came from Japanese over-seas, from hearts that turn with loving remembrance to the land of their birth, in which the Meiji era has been the brightest of all their history.²⁹

²⁷ Kikuchi, *Japanese Education*, p. 8.

²⁸ Okuma, *Fifty Years of New Japan*, pp. 123, 128, 130, 133.

²⁹ *Japan Advertiser*, January 18, 1918, p. 2.

In view of what has been said above concerning the imperial prerogative, it may surprise the reader to have it said that in spite of the tendency to mikadoism in this land, there is here to be found, deep seated in the national life, the roots of democracy. But this is nevertheless the fact. And recent world movements are even in Japan forcing to the front these democratic tendencies. Nothing can be more interesting to the student of socio-political affairs than is the caution and nervousness of many of the leaders as they approach this subject. Viscount Kato, foreign minister in the late Okuma cabinet, has just delivered himself of some statements touching upon this subject, as has also Mr. Inukai, leader of the Kokumin or National Party. But this subject of democracy in Japan must find expression in another article.³⁰

I have devoted this large proportion of space to the consideration of the emperor in Japanese political life in order that the reader might gain the right perspective in the study of Japanese political institutions. Let us now consider in turn the political machinery through which the emperor works.

THE PRIVY COUNCIL

The privy council is a body organized under the constitution. It is composed of some twenty-five members, all chosen by the emperor. Members of the cabinet, are ex officio members of this body, Article LVI, of the constitution says: "The privy councillors shall, in accordance with the provisions for the organization of the privy council, deliberate upon important matters of state when they have been consulted by the emperor."

Prince Ito in his *Commentaries* mentions the

Establishment of the privy council . . . to serve as the highest body of the emperor's constitutional advisers. . . . The privy council is the palladium of the constitution and of the

³⁰ *Japan Advertiser*, January 21, 1918, p. 1. *Japan Advertiser*, January 18, 1918, article by Dr. Yoshino. *Herald of Asia*, various articles, September to November, 1917. Pooley, *Hayashi's Secret Memoirs*, p. 67. Brinkley, *China and Japan*, iv, pp. 219, 220, quoted by Uyehara, p. 26.

law. . . . The privy council is to hold deliberations only when its opinion has been sought by the emperor; and it is entirely for him to accept or reject any opinion expressed. . . . As to a matter about which the opinion of that body has been furnished to the emperor, no publicity can be given to it, however trifling it may be without his special permission."³¹

The following points as to the organization of the privy council, taken from imperial ordinances on the subject, may be of interest:

Imperial ordinance of 1888, as amended 1890:

Article II. The privy council shall consist of one president, one vice-president, twenty-five councillors, one chief secretary, and five secretaries.

Article VI. The privy council shall hold its meetings for the purpose of advising his majesty the emperor, and shall state its opinion with regard to the following matters:

1. Matters which come under its jurisdiction according to the *Koshitsu Tempan* (Law of the Houses).

2. Drafts and doubtful points relating to articles of the constitution and to laws and ordinances dependent to the constitution.

3. Proclamations of the law of siege provided for in Article XIV, and imperial ordinances mentioned in Articles VIII and LXII of the constitution, as well as all other imperial ordinances of a restrictive character.

4. International treaties and pledges.

5. Matters relating to the amendment of the organization of the privy council and the rules for conducting business in the privy council.

6. Matters specially called for, besides those mentioned in the last paragraphs.

Article X, Par. 2. The president shall cause the chief secretary to make explanation and shall afterwards allow the members to discuss matters freely, but no member can speak without obtaining the permission of the president, who may engage in all debates, and shall point out the questions to be decided, and require members to vote with regard to the same.

³¹ Ito, *Commentaries*, as above, p. 108, 109.

We also reproduce from the original ordinance of April 28, 1888, the following statement:

Article VIII. Though the privy council is the emperor's highest resort of council, it shall not interfere with the executive.³²

The above quotations make it clear that the privy council is purely and only a consultative body. The people have no voice in its formation or dissolution, and no clear knowledge of its transactions. It has no administrative power, and can originate nothing. It is purely for the convenience of the sovereign. While Prince Ito, as above, places the privy council above the cabinet in importance, as do some other writers, the constitution itself does not do so; and Ito's position in this respect is directly challenged today by some of Japan's most prominent statesman. It is held by the latter, and we think rightly, that however valuable to the ruler the advice of his councillors may be, the constitution places the responsibility for sound advice and for correct administration upon the cabinet. And should the privy council become too active in political matters, there would at once arise friction of a serious nature. It can scarcely be held soberly that because the emperor may consult his councillors on any matter either before or after the diet has acted thereon, the privy council is in fact therefore a body of higher standing than the cabinet. In fact recent press criticism admonishes the privy council to keep its place as an advisory body, and not to cause friction by interfering with political administration.³³

THE GENRŌ OR "ELDER STATESMEN"

I have said "elder statesmen" because this is the popular translation given to the term "*genrō*"; but the above translation is misleading and inadequate. *Genrō* is a compound of two Chinese ideographs, pronounced in Japanese "*gen*" and "*rō*." *Gen* means formation, beginning, first, chief;

³² Clement, *Constitutional Imperialism in Japan*, p. 11. Clement, *A Short History of Japan*, p. 129.

³³ *Herald of Asia*, June 3, 1916, p. 333.

rō as a noun, means old person, *veteran*. *Chief Veteran* would be a more fitting translation than *genrō*.

The interesting fact which is scarcely, if at all, known among foreign students of Japanese politics, is that the correct official title for these personages is *genkun* ("the most meritorious"), which is the designation applied to them in the imperial rescripts addressed to them separately and commanding them to advise the throne whenever requested.³⁴

The *genrō* are not mentioned in the constitution. In reality they are an extra-constitutional body, chosen by the emperor at his own free will. The institution originated with the late Meiji Tennō, about 1885, or early in his wise and constructive reign. Prince Sanjo was probably the first subject to be honored with this title, *genkun*, or *genrō*. The political changes wrought by the restoration were radical, and to meet the confused state of affairs wisely would be a mighty task for any ruler. There had as yet been formed no consultative or deliberative body competent to assist in guiding the imperial will, and he naturally turned for advice to those who had served the state in the restoration days. Such names as Aoki, Ito, Inouye, Itagaki, Matsukata, Saigo, Sanjō, Saionji, Ōkubo, Ōkuma, Ōyama, Yamagata, Yoshikawa, and others equally great can never be disregarded in Japanese history. From this class of men, who had saved the Throne in the national crisis, Emperor Mutsuhito usually chose three from the Chōshū Clan, and three from the Satsuma Clan, and with them freely consulted as to the conduct of national affairs.³⁵ The present emperor has continued the practice of his illustrious father in this regard, and has added the name of Marquis Saionji as a *genrō*.³⁶

But ruthless time is doing its work, and but three of these fathers now remain: Prince Yamagata, who has the strongest following, Marquis Matsukata and Marquis Saionji.

³⁴ *Herald of Asia*, November 4, 1916, p. 164. Uyehara—see Index. McLaren, W. W., *Trans. Asiatic Soc. of Japan*, vol. xlii, pt. I, pp. lxxxii, 127–133. *Japan Weekly Mail*, December 7, 1912, p. 676. Enlightening Ed.

³⁵ *Japan Weekly Mail*, as above, December 7, 1912, p. 676.

³⁶ *Herald of Asia*, October 7, 1916, p. 38; November 4, 1916, p. 164. *Japan Year Book*, 1916, pp. 639, 640, 647. *Japan Year Book*, 1917, pp. 635, 644.

The *genrō* have not been king-makers like the "Warwicks," but cabinet-makers. They are a survival of feudalism, an anachronism, and would not exist but for the immature state of political institutions in Japan.

As regards their practical usefulness, I have taken pains to interview many thoughtful Japanese within the last year or two, as well as to consult the press continuously, and from cabinet officers to business men those interviewed have generally agreed that the day of their real usefulness has passed. But so thought men a dozen years ago; and yet the last cabinet changes gave the Japanese political world a decided jolt, when the *genrō* stepped in between the outgoing premier and the throne.

Let us look a little more deeply into this phase of Japanese political life. If King George were to ignore the leaders of political parties in England, and appoint as his premier a man who had been named to him say by Mr. Balfour and Mr. Northcliffe, or any other bystander, he would instantly have the whole British nation to deal with. The above action of the *genrō* made the greatest political stir in a small section of Japanese capital life that it has yet felt; but in comparison the Tokyo storm was beneath notice. And why? Marquis Ōkuma certainly tried to turn the political tide in favor of party government, and until he had definitely laid down his port folio, the *genrō* could not handle the situation; but when finally he did definitely resign, his recommendations received from neither the emperor nor the *genrō* any worthwhile consideration.³⁷ And why?

Turn now to the conduct of the negotiations leading up to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.³⁸ Here is a case in which the *genrō* were again clearly working against the government then in power and, in which eventually the emperor decides against the leading *genrō*. It further appears from this and other similar cases that the *genrō* do not always

³⁷ *Herald of Asia*, July 15, 1916, p. 518; September 16, 1916, p. 806; October 7, 1916, p. 35.

³⁸ Pooley, *Secret Memoirs of Count Hayashi*, pp. 140, 143, 165, 166, 201, 208, 266.

agree among themselves, Prince Yamagata being always counted on the side of the army, while Prince Ito and Count Inouye could not always agree with him. Since the removal of those two influential characters from the scene, Prince Yamagata is the strongest, though not the only *genrō* influence remaining. This old hero is considered most decidedly conservative, and is bitterly opposed to party government, while Ōkuma strongly favors party government. Ōkuma's failure in his Chinese policy gave the *genrō* their opportunity to score a point. They also well know, as every one acquainted with Japanese conditions must know, that there is as yet very little real cohesion in Japanese political party life. The *genrō* could therefore venture in this instance to slap the party leaders in the face. At the next crisis it may not be so. Mr. Pooley is therefore not quite correct when he estimates that "The policies of Japan are made by the *genrō* and merely executed by the ministry for the time being."³⁹ And I am not so sure as is Professor Clement that the "First quarter century of constitutionalism in Japan has (seen) the almost complete elimination of this once strong extra-constitutional factor," the *genrō* influence.⁴⁰ I rather believe that Japanese politics still greatly needs a stabilizer, and that until political parties have secured better organization and are able to stand for great principles instead of being so largely built around individual politicians, the *genrō* will continue to wield a salutary influence, and to be a thorn in the sides of the yellow journals, and of the half-ripe politicians.⁴¹ Some day the *genrō* will have to yield to better parliamentary methods; they do not belong to a modern enlightened political system; they indicate the presence of a battle going on—a battle between the old and the new; between clan influences as reminders of a feudal past, and the new Japan imported from the West.

When that time will come nobody can say for certain, though there is no doubt that our political progress is steadily in that direction. We can, however, safely say that it will not come in a

³⁹ Pooley, *Secret Memoirs of Hayashi*, p. 237.

⁴⁰ Clement, Prof. E. W., *Constitutional Imperialism*, as above, p. 12.

⁴¹ *Japan Magazine*, December, 1916, p. 495.

few years, and in the meantime the institution of the *genrō* will continue a real power in politics. And no fair minded observer can say that its continued existence is against the best interests of the country.⁴²

The quotation above given doubtless represents the best conservative opinion on this subject today; but to present a fair statement of the case, note must be taken of the rising agitation of this question among the younger politicians, a large portion of the press of the country, and the student class of the universities. Officialdom naturally wishes to counteract this rising tide of discussion, and perhaps shows its hand most clearly in the recent court decision in the Tagawa case.

Mr. Daikichiro Tagawa, a member of parliament, and staunch supporter of Mr. Yukio Ozaki, M.P., former mayor of Tokyo and minister of justice in the Ōkuma cabinet, Mr. Tagawa having been parliamentary under-secretary, and a prominent Christian man, wrote several articles for Japanese magazines, in which he attacked the *genrō* for some of their doings. Mr. Tagawa was arrested by the public procurator of Tokyo courts on a charge of lese-majesty, tried in the Tokyo court, convicted, appealed to the supreme court, was there beaten, and on December 17, Judge Tsuru sentenced him to five months' imprisonment and 100 *yen* fine.⁴³ Meanwhile meetings demanding larger freedom are being held all over the country, and the actions of the members of the diet, a new session of which has been recently opened, indicates a stormy time ahead.

In closing this article, and before proceeding to consider the cabinet, the diet, the political parties and the future, it may be well to note briefly once more the operation of one or more of the influences the study of which is the object specially before us.

In drafting the constitution, Prince Ito, its father in a peculiar sense, was particularly careful to make it appear that the instrument then being promulgated contained nothing new. It was merely the making of a formal state-

⁴² *Herald of Asia*, November 4, 1916, p. 165.

⁴³ *Herald of Asia*, December 22, 1917, p. 386.

ment of what had always been; and this thought is even put into the imperial words in the preamble to the second edition of Ito's *Commentaries on the Constitution*.⁴⁴ It is in the introduction to Chapter I,⁴⁵ as above quoted. It fills his notes to the successive sections of the constitution in Chapter I.

Whether this emphasis accords exactly with the facts the pages of history abundantly show, and the matter needs no discussion here. Mr. Uyehara also places great emphasis upon "Mikadoism" as we have seen. In fact, every effort has been made to lock up every interest of the empire of Japan in the keeping of the imperial house. No change in constitutional or statute law can be made, no important officer appointed or dismissed, nothing can be done without the emperor's personal consent thereto. For the will of the people to have free play, no room whatever is left, and evidently none was intended. If this is not feudalism, the clan spirit to a serious degree, what shall we call it? And here it is accompanied by the theocratic idea in addition.⁴⁶ But even this is not the whole case, for, as the above pages repeatedly show, the Japanese family idea, with the emperor as the head of the race, is inexplicably interwoven with Japanese political thought in a thousand ways.

How these safely-guarded prerogatives are being antagonized and possibly undermined by modern political ideas and world-moving forces must find treatment in an article to follow.

⁴⁴ Ito, *Commentaries*, as above, p. 1.

⁴⁵ Ito, *Commentaries*, as above, p. 2.

⁴⁶ Uyehara, as above, pp. 21, 68. McLaren, W. W., *Transactions of Asiatic Society of Japan*, xlii, pt. I, p. xlix.